

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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OMB-01 /058 W

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P R 171005Z MAY 76

FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9230

INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

COMUSJAPAN YOKOTA

C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 7258

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, JA

SUBJECT: CHALLENGE TO MIKI COOLS--A BIT

REF: TOKYO 7179

SUMMARY. LAST WEEK'S CHALLENGE TO PM MIKI, MOUNTED BY LDP VICE PRESIDENT SHIINA, COOLED SOMEWHAT OVER THE WEEKEND. SHIINA REPORTEDLY AGREED TO COOPERATE IN GETTING LEGISLATION THROUGH IN THE CLOSING DAYS OF THE DIET AND MIKI TOOK THE OFFENSIVE IN SEVERAL APPEARANCES. EDITORIAL REACTION TO SHIINA MOVE HAS BEEN VERY CRITICAL AND PRESS HAS HINTED AT POSSIBLE SHIINA PLOT TO COVER UP LOCKHEED. THOUGH WE ARE IN A LULL, IT WILL BE SHORT-LIVED AS LDP CONTENDERS PONDER PERSONAL ADVANTAGES IN DIET EXTENSION. END SUMMARY.

1. THE ANTI-MIKI CAMPAIGN, MOUNTED LAST WEEK BY LDP

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VICE PRESIDENT SHIINA SUBSIDED NOTICEABLY OVER THE

WEEKEND. SHIINA CAME UNDER INCREASING LDP CRITICISM AT THE END OF LAST WEEK FOR MOVING TOO QUICKLY, JUST WHEN THE DIET SESSION IS ENTERING ITS FINAL, CRUCIAL WEEK. MAY 15 EDITORIAL COMMENT WAS UNANIMOUSLY ANTI-SHIINA, NOTING THAT PEOPLE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND WHY HE CHOSE TO MOVE AT THIS JUNCTURE AND HINTING THAT HE MIGHT BE MOTIVATED MORE BY A DESIRE TO COVER UP LOCKHEED THAN TO RESTRUCTURE THE LDP.

2. SHIINA, HIMSELF, SHOWED SIGNS OF RETREAT DURING MAY 14 MEETING WITH FINMIN OHIRA WHERE HE REPORTEDLY AGREED ON THE NECESSITY FOR COOPERATION DURING THE CLOSING DAYS OF THE DIET SESSION.

3. MIKI AGAIN TOOK THE OFFENSIVE DURING MAY 14 MEETING OF LDP PARTY EXECUTIVES AND IN MAY 16 PRESS CONFERENCE WHERE HE REITERATED HIS DETERMINATION TO SEE LOCKHEED AFFAIR THROUGH TO A SATISFACTORY CONCLUSION. AT PRESS CONFERENCE, MIKI TOOK AN OBLIQUE SWIPE AT SHIINA BY NOTING THAT HE COULD NOT UNDERSTAND SHIINA'S REAL INTENTION, IN VIEW OF HIS OWN RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE PEOPLE. AND HE AGAIN DENIED ANY INTENTION TO DISSOLVE THE LOWER HOUSE OR CARRY OUT A CABINET REORGANIZATION IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

4. COMMENT. WHILE ONE OF SHIINA'S MOTIVES IN ORCHESTRATING LAST WEEK'S ATTACK ON MIKI MAY HAVE BEEN TO SERVE NOTICE ON THE PRIME MINISTER THAT HE MUST NOT USE LOCKHEED NAMES AS A POLITICAL WEAPON - AS HE HAS ON OCCASION THREATENDED TO DO--IT APPEARS ALSO THAT SHIINA IS SERIOUS ABOUT TOPPLING MIKI, SHOULD THE OPPORTUNITY ARISE. THE SWORDS THAT WERE DRAWN HAVE APPARENTLY BEEN SHEATHED FOR THE MOMENT. BUT WE ANTICIPATE THAT FACTIONAL MANUEVERING WILL INTENSIFY AS THE LDP LEADERSHIP PONDERES THE FACTIONAL ADVANTAGES OF DIET EXTENSION TOWARD THE END OF THE WEEK.
HODGSON

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